

MINUTES
New Hampshire State Commission on Aging
Monday, March 20, 2023 10:00 a.m.-Noon
NH Employment Security, 45 South Fruit St., Concord, NH

Present in person: Susan Ruka, Chair; Carol Stamatakis, Vice Chair; Roberta Berner, Clerk; Sunny Mulligan Shea, DOJ; Wendi Aultman, DHHS; Richard Lavers, NHES; Tracy McGraw, DOL; Ray Fernandez, DOS; Appointed by the Governor: Polly Campion, Suzanne Demers, Daniel Marcek, Kristi St. Laurent, Roxie Severance, Rep. Lucy McVitty Weber, Rev. Susan Nolan

Rebecca Sky, Executive Director; Chris Dugan, Communications and Engagement Director

Present via teleconference Susan Buxton, Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Lynn Lippitt, NH Housing Finance Authority; Shelley Winters, DOT; Beth Quarm Todgham, Laurie Duff, Susan Denopoulos

Absent: Rep. James MacKay; Rep. Charles McMahan; Sen. Bill Gannon; Harry Viens, Doug McNutt

Presenters: Christina FitzPatrick, AARP-NH; Rich Lavers and Brian Gottlob, NH Department of Employment Security; Ahni Malachi, NH Human Rights Commission; Ryan King, Northeast Delta Dental

Guests: Heather Carroll, Jennifer Rabalais, Margaret Frankhauser, John Wilson, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Heather Smith, NH Care Collaborative, Thom O'Connor

I. Welcome, Attendance, Review of Minutes

Chair Sue Ruka provided an overview of the agenda and welcomed the Commission members and guests to the meeting. Today's meeting was held concurrently in person at NH Employment Security and via teleconference. Because the state Emergency Order is no longer in place, a quorum of Commission members must be present in person to take action. A quorum was present in person.

Roxie Severance made a motion to approve the minutes of the February Commission meeting; Rep. Lucy Weber seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously by voice vote of those members in the room and also by vote of those members attending via teleconference.

II. Older Workers and the Workplace

Chair Ruka welcomed and introduced the presenters.

A. Christina FitzPatrick, State Director, AARP-NH

Ms. FitzPatrick noted several AARP findings about older workers: in recent years, older worker participation in the workforce has doubled; mixed age teams perform better in the workplace; and workers aged 50 and older engage better and are more loyal employees. At the same time, AARP finds that older adults continue to experience age discrimination. They are much less likely to be called in for an interview than younger job seekers, and when they are unemployed it takes them far longer to find employment equal in wages and benefits to their prior position. Even "help wanted" ads send out ageist signals—"looking for a digital native," "looking for an energetic..." or specifying maximum years of experience.

She said that employment for older adults is most successful when it offers flexible work arrangements, training opportunities, and support for those with caregiving responsibilities.

B. Rich Lavers and Brian Gottlob, NH Department of Employment Security (PowerPoint presentation attached)

1. New Hampshire has recovered private sector jobs faster than the region (2.3% over pre-Covid employment) but has a workforce crisis with jobs in some sectors very difficult to fill.
2. Among sectors struggling with filling jobs are hospitals (a 4.4% drop since late 2019), nursing and residential care (an 8% drop), and social assistance (a 3.8% drop). Growth across sectors has been uneven, with growth in professional and technical services outpacing all other sectors.
3. The state's labor force continues to remain below its pre-pandemic peak. Although New Hampshire has had a 3% population growth, primarily through in-migration, the labor force is down by 1.8% (close to 15,000 individuals).
4. While labor force participation among older adults dropped significantly during the years of the pandemic, some older workers are returning to work. Younger workers (aged 20 to 39) left the workforce in large numbers and have not returned. Speculation is that generous benefits and stimulus dollars during the pandemic, coupled with ready availability of gig work, are the cause.
5. Demand for services for older residents is rising, but employment in the key industries of home health care, continuing care/assisted living, and skilled nursing fell between 2015 and 2022 (including a 23% decline at skilled nursing facilities).
6. Workers in sectors serving older residents skew older than the state's overall workforce and 85% are women. Workforce losses have occurred across all age groups, teen to 54, with the only increases in the groups aged 55 to 64 and 65 to 99.
7. Much of the decline in healthcare jobs in the state is in the nursing field, particularly among nursing assistants and registered nurses; monthly job postings for registered nurses have doubled since 2019. Many of those postings are from support agencies and temporary staffing agencies. Competition for registered nurses has increased over 40%, plus on net, approximately 1,300 more registered nurses commute out of state to work than commute in. Overall, salaries are lower in New Hampshire than in Massachusetts, even when adjusted for cost of living. The same does not seem to be the case for nursing assistants.
8. One idea under consideration (through HB2) is to offer student debt relief to registered nurses if they contract to remain working in New Hampshire for a period of three years. Funds would come from the 529 program (scholarship dollars). Most nursing students graduate with more than \$25,000 in federal student debt, and loan forgiveness can help make registered nurse wages in New Hampshire competitive with Massachusetts wages.

C. Ahni Malachi, Executive Director, NH Human Rights Commission

Ms. Malachi briefly described the Commission, formed in 1965 to enforce New Hampshire's laws regarding discrimination in employment, public accommodations, housing, and K-12 public education. The top issues that come to the Commission concern those around the Adults With Disabilities Act (ADA). By far, the most age-related cases that have come to the Commission deal with employment discrimination. Age discrimination issues could be brought forth by younger workers as well as older workers.

She said that the Commission has 10 staff, including five investigators, and seven appointed commissioners. In addition to enforcing laws regarding discrimination, the Commission attempts to mediate and also conducts trainings.

D. Ryan King, Vice President, Human Resources, Northeast Delta Dental

Mr. King spoke about Northeast Delta Dental as an employer that "embraces the multi-generational workforce" and supports an "inclusive culture." The company aims to retain and recruit older workers and focuses on multi-generational training for both experienced and new employees. The company

assists employees as they transition into retirement and offers flexibility to them during the transition, which helps the company with succession planning.

Mr. King said that Northeast Delta Dental has 250 employees of which more than 40% are aged 50 and over. Its low turn-over rate (9%) is mostly comprised of staff retiring, many of whom come back to work part-time. He was asked if recruitment and retention of older workers is discussed much in human resources professional associations, and he responded “not as much as it should be,” with the larger focus diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

III. COA Policy Team: Overview of Tracked Bills (Polly Campion)

Polly Campion presented the Commission’s policy group Legislative report. The group meets every Friday at 1 p.m. during the Legislative Session to review bills and their status. An up-to-date hand-out of tracked bills is available through the Commission office.

She spoke about the budget trailer bill, HB2, which includes policies related to HB1 (House Budget), including policies related to professional licensing. The Governor proposed repealing 34 current licenses and ending or merging a number of licensure boards. Last Friday, several aging services-related groups met and shared the view that there is a benefit to maintaining the license for Licensed Nursing Assistants.

At the January meeting, the Commission approved supporting SB36, addressing the long-term care system in the state. The bill has now been passed by the Senate, with amendments. Amended out of the bill was expanding the State Ombudsman’s office to include monitoring of the Choices for Independence program.

Ms. Campion briefly discussed HB594 (addressing out-of-state licenses), SB86 (increasing Medicaid provider rates), HB 130 (repealing the Drug Affordability Board—retained in Committee), SB 234 (increasing awareness of brain health—passed by Senate, tabled by House, possibly going into HB2) and other bills. With bills due to cross-over from the House to the Senate and Senate to the House within the next two weeks, this is a particularly busy time in the Legislature.

IV. Older Adult Volunteer Awards

Beth Quarm Todgham and Chris Dugan are working together on this annual program. To date, the Commission has received 30 nominations for the awards (one per county). Polly Campion, Susan Denopoulos and Roxie Severance have agreed to serve on the selection committee. Beth welcomes additional volunteers to assist on the committee.

V. Public Input

Chair Ruka invited input from the public.

John Wilson spoke about federal funds allocated to New Hampshire that could be used to support transportation for older adults. He said the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) was working to increase the state appropriation for public transportation and related items, since federal dollars require a match. The funds could go toward a DOT study on transportation needs of New Hampshire’s older adults (supported by the Commission) and toward increased mobility management.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

**The next Commission meeting will take place on
Monday, April 17, 2023, 10 a.m.-Noon
NH Hospital Association, 125 Airport Road, Concord, NH 03301**

Labor Market Trends in the New Hampshire Economy and in Healthcare Industries Serving Elderly Citizens

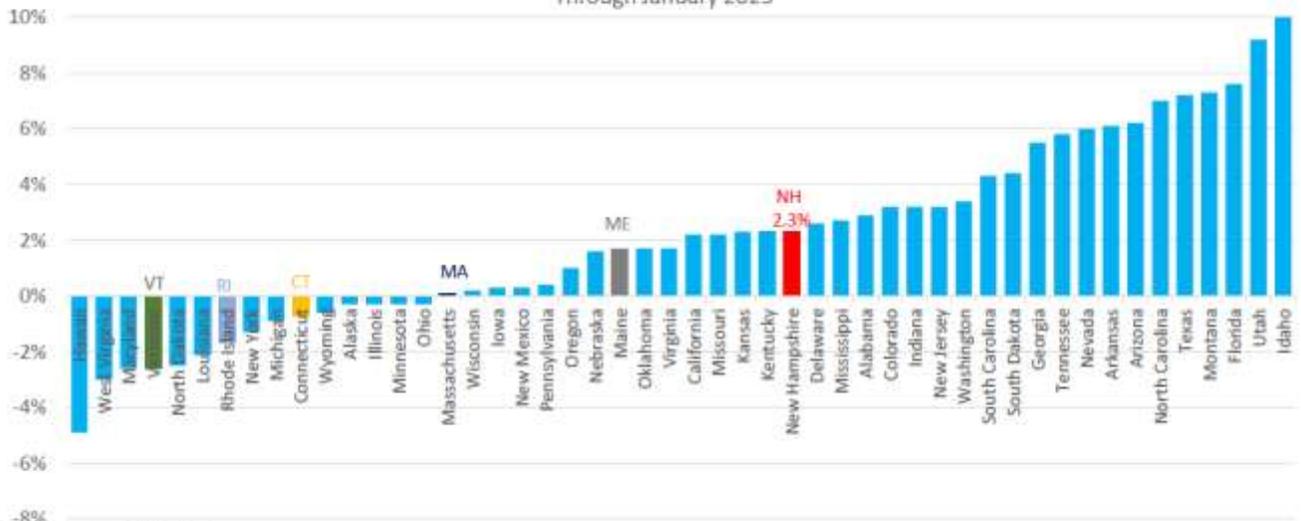
Presentation to:
 New Hampshire Commission on Aging
 March 20, 2023

Richard Lavers, Deputy Commissioner
 NH Dept. of Employment Security &
 Brian Gottlob, Director
 NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau
 NH Dept. of Employment Security

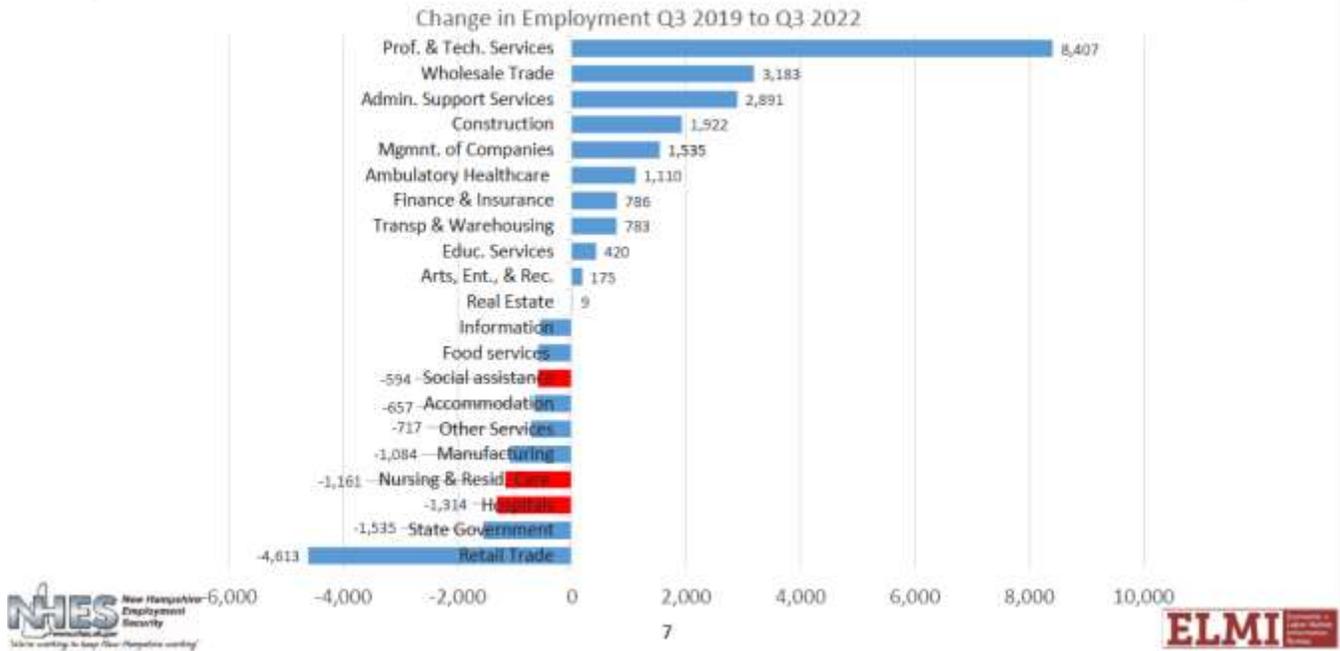


New Hampshire Has Recovered Private Sector Jobs Faster Than Region

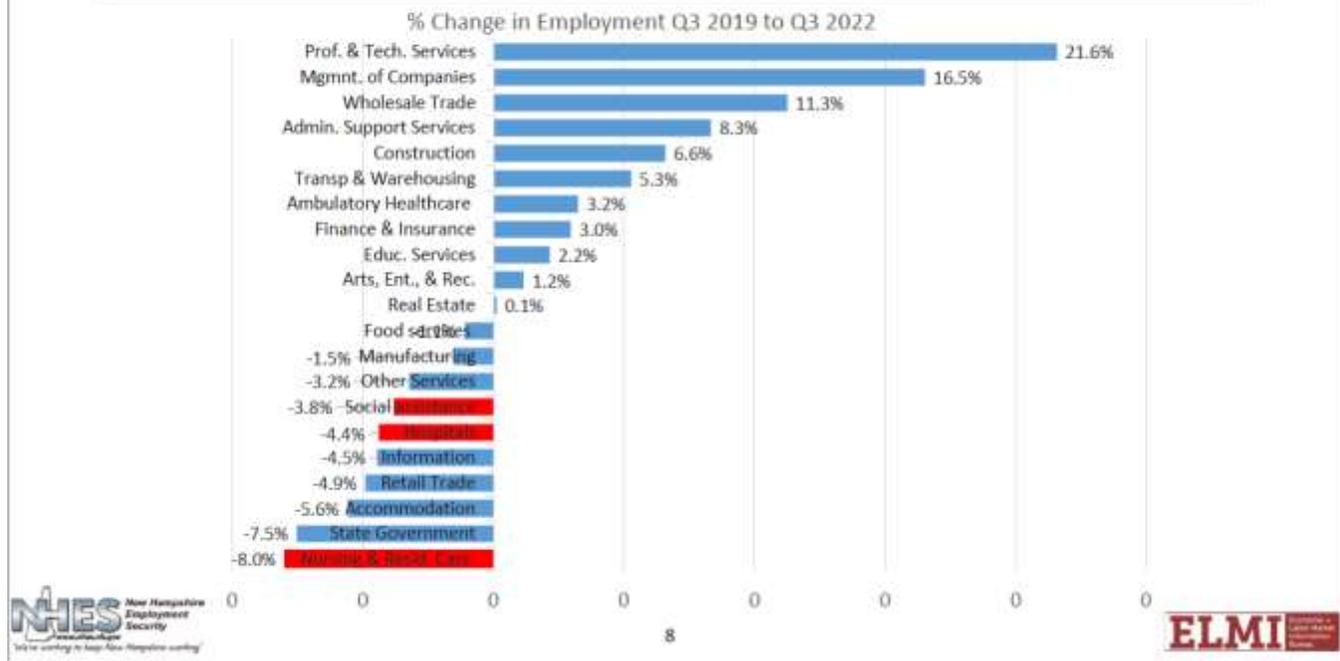
How Close Each State is to Recovering Pre-Covid Peak Level of Private Employment Through January 2023



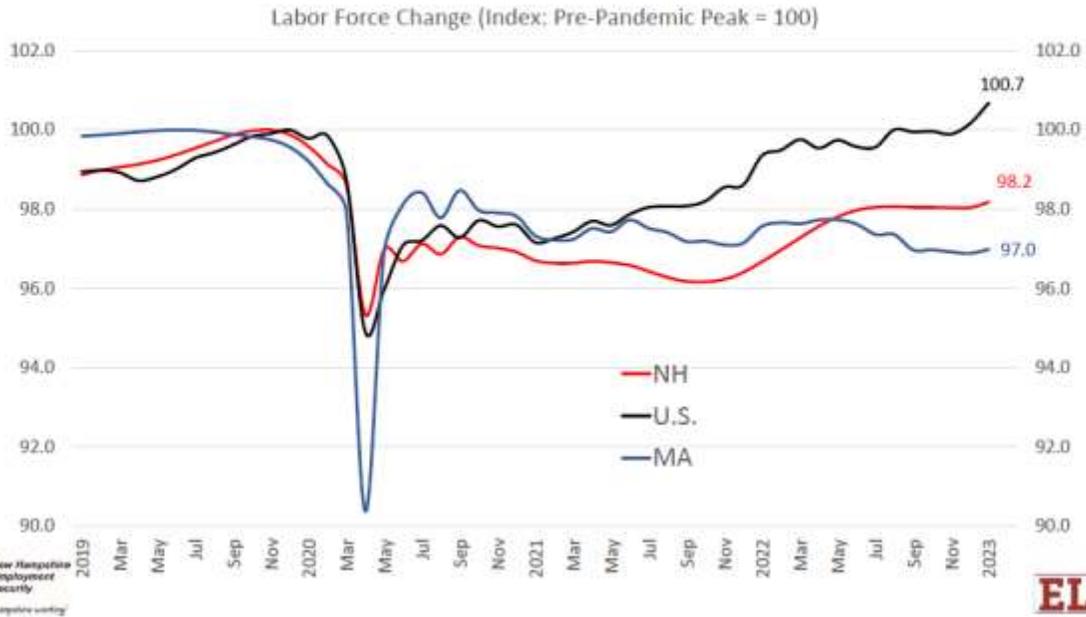
New Hampshire Has Regained Pre-Pandemic Levels of Private Sector Employment but Some Industries Remain Below Late 2019 Levels



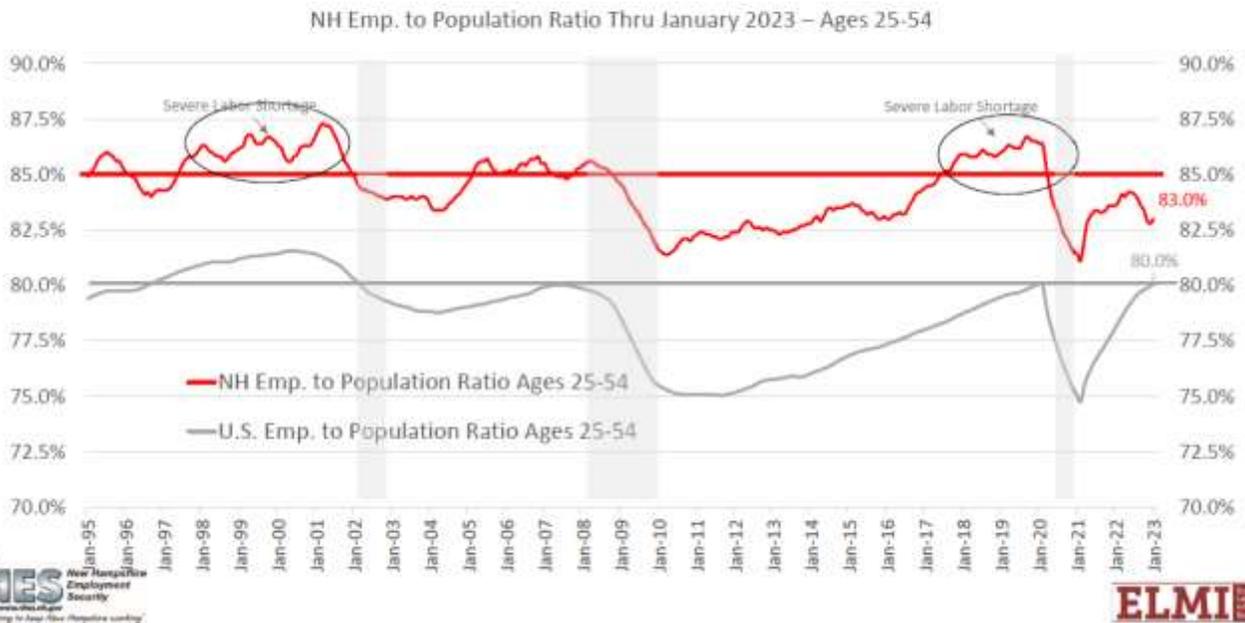
Hospitals, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities Also Among the Largest Employment Declines on a Percentage Basis



Our State's Biggest Challenge is to Growth is Labor Force. It is Recovering, but Slowly, and Remains Below Pre-Pandemic Peak

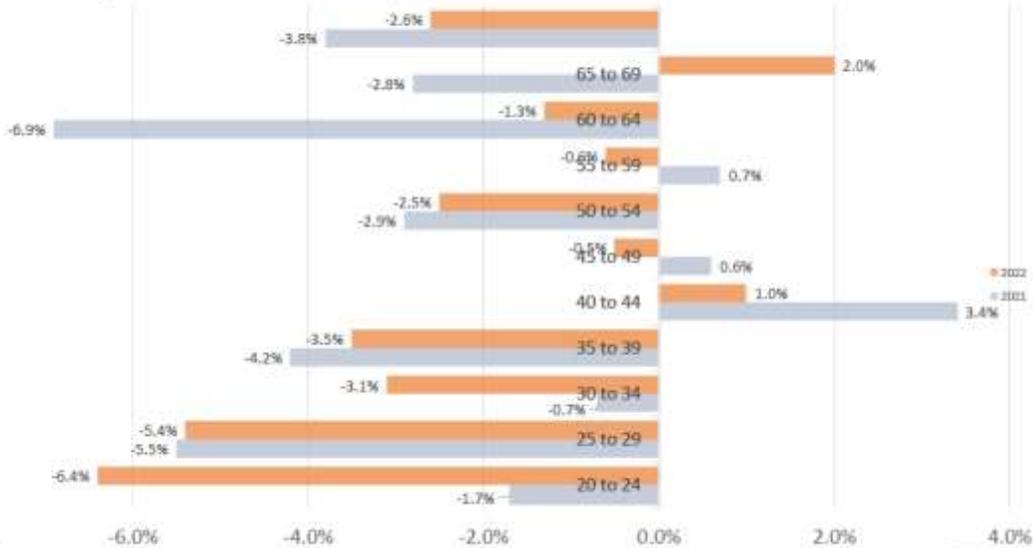


Employment Among the Prime-Age Labor Force Remains Below "Full Employment" – There is Still Room to Grow



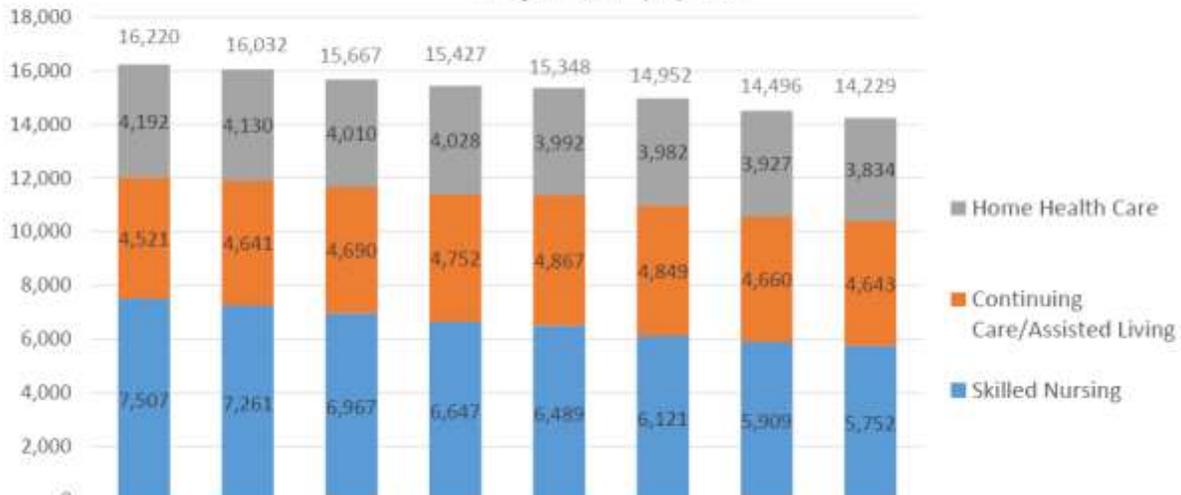
Improvement in NH Labor Force Participation From Pre-Covid Rates Has Been Mixed – Young People the Biggest Issue

% Change in NH's Labor Force Participation Rates From Pre-Covid Rates



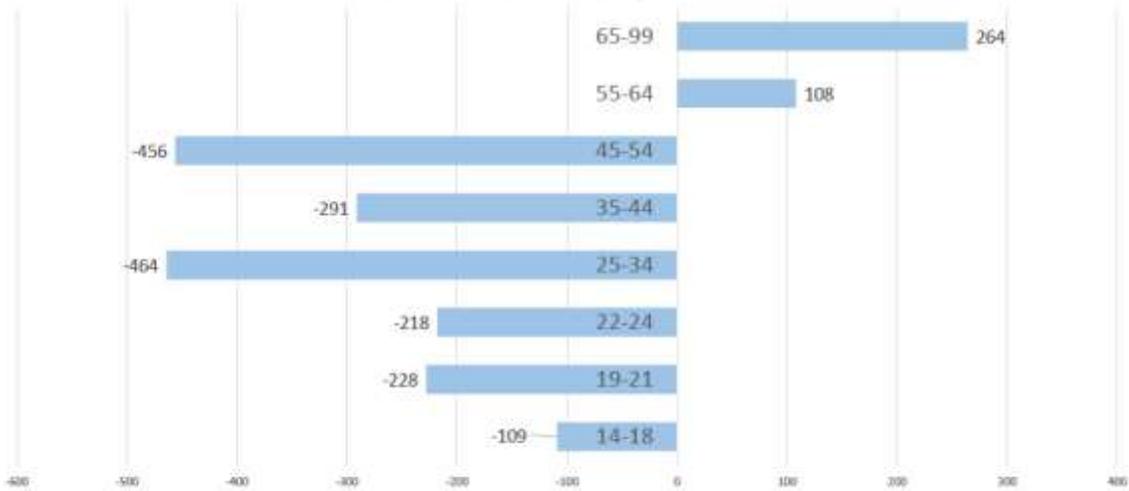
Demand for Services to Older Residents is Rising but Employment in Key Industries Fell Between 2015 and 2022 (Including a 23% Decline at Skilled Nursing Facilities)

Change in NH Employment



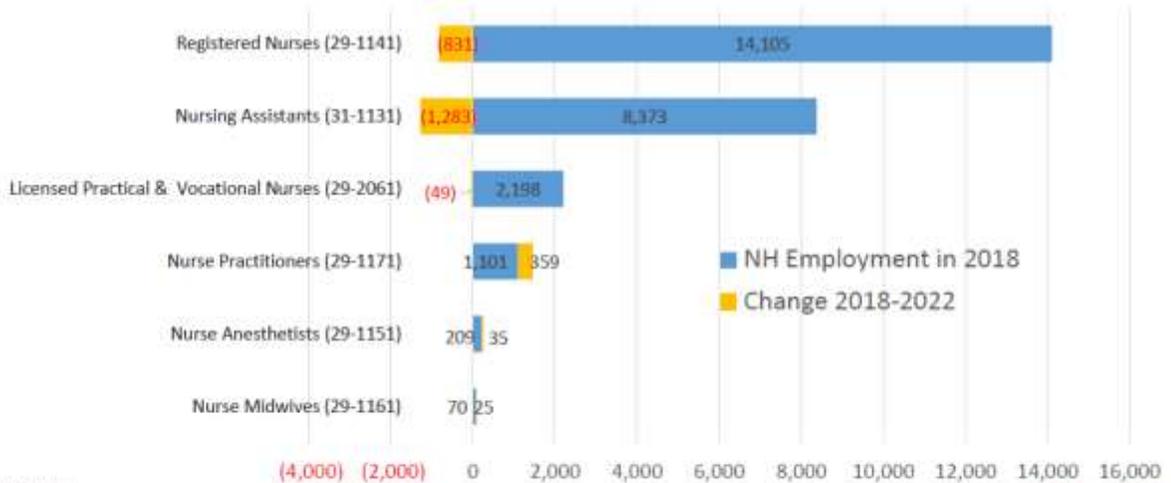
Workers in Industries Serving Older Residents Skew Older Than the NH Workforce Overall and 85% are Women (Compared to 48 Percent in all Other Industries) and Those Trends are Continuing

Change in Employment by Age 2015 to 2022

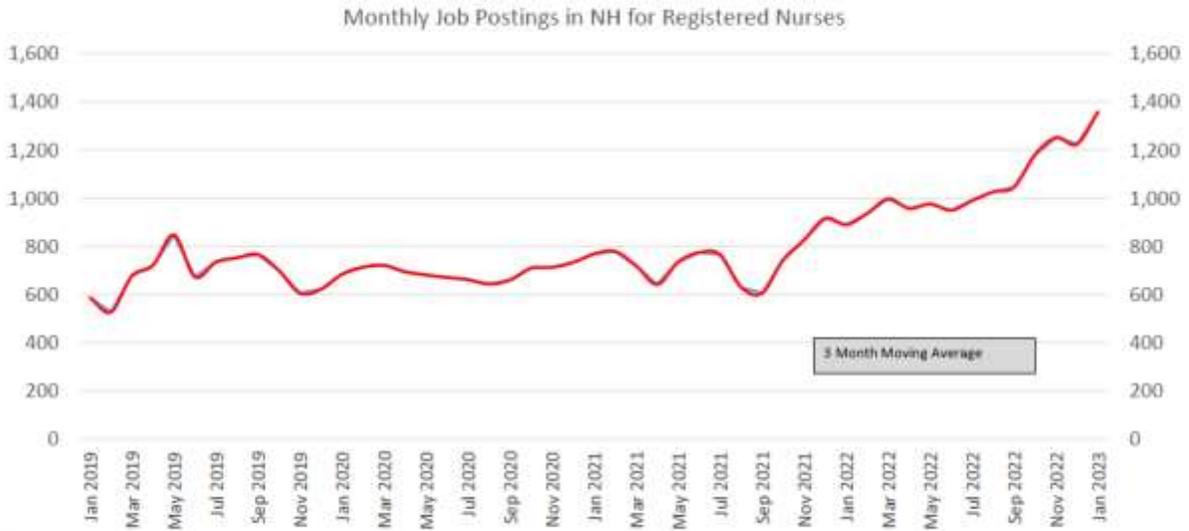


Much of the Decline in Healthcare Jobs in New Hampshire is in the Nursing Field – Nursing Assistants and Registered Nurses in Particular

Nursing Employment in NH 2018 and Change in 2022



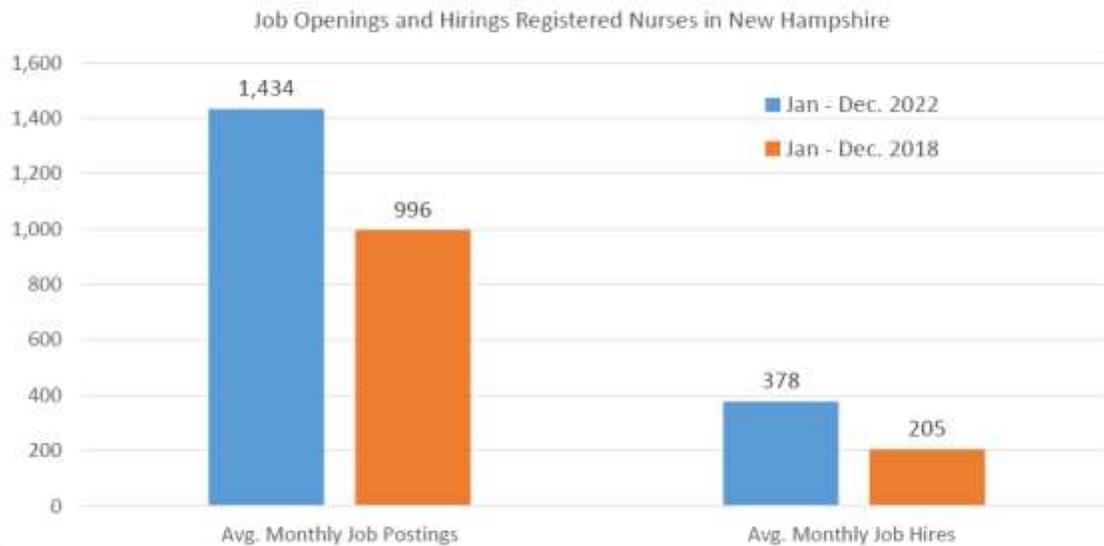
Monthly Job Postings for Registered Nurses Have Doubled Since 2019



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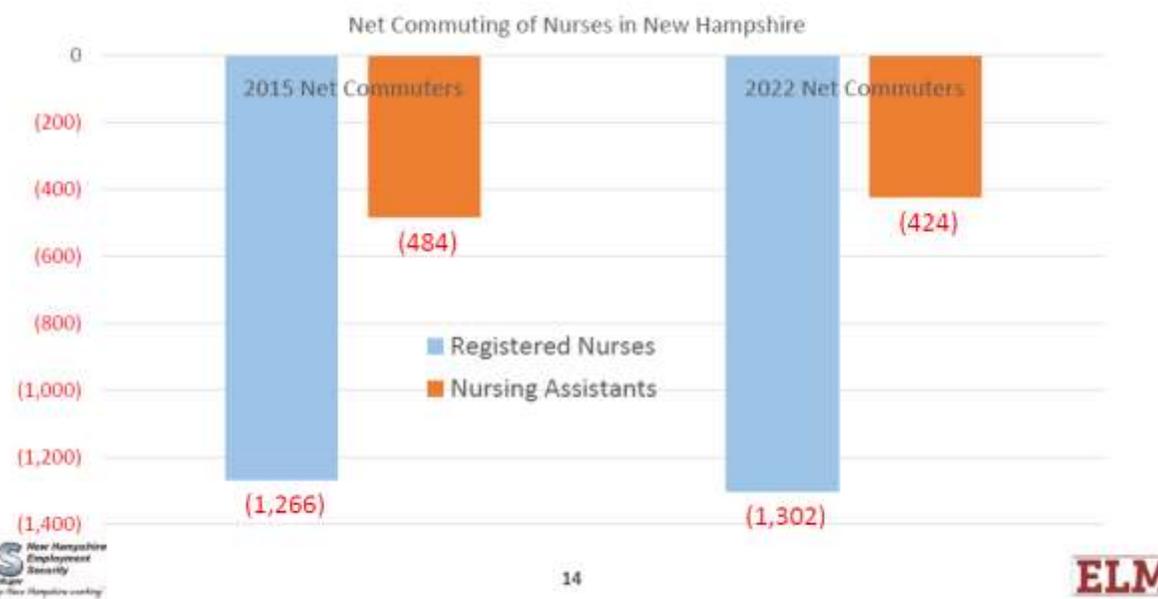
Average Monthly Hiring of Registered Nurses Nearly Doubled From Pre-Pandemic Levels, but Competition for Them (Including by Non-Healthcare Industries) Has Increased Over 40 Percent



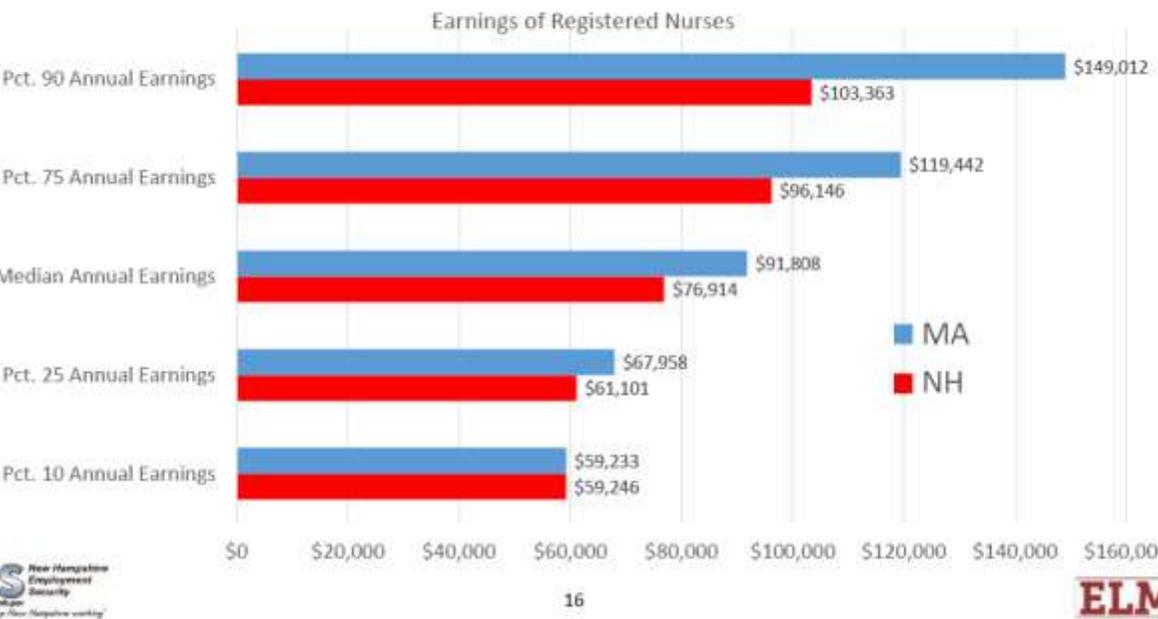
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On Net, About 1,300 More Registered Nurses Commute Out of New Hampshire to Work than Commute Into the State

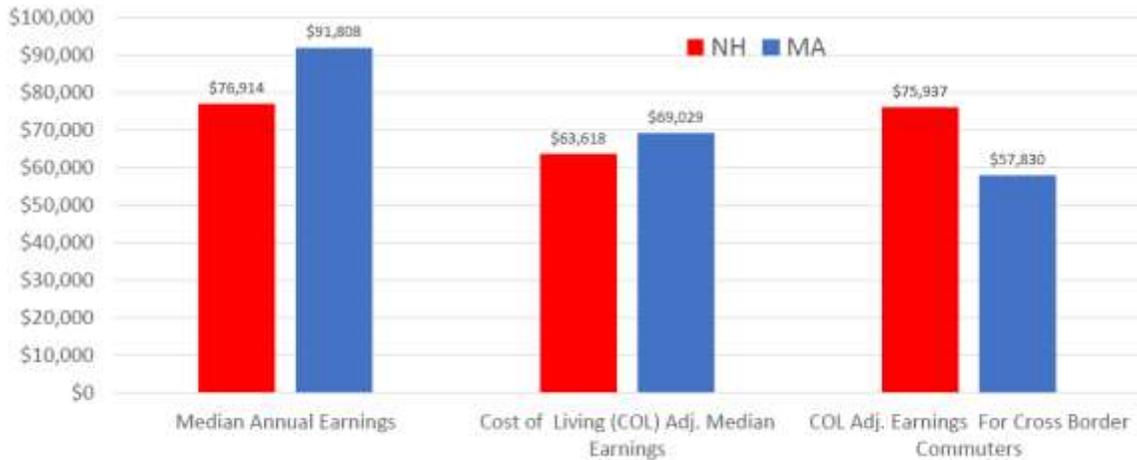


Annual Earnings Differentials Increase Sharply for Registered Nurses Between New Hampshire and Massachusetts as Experience Increases



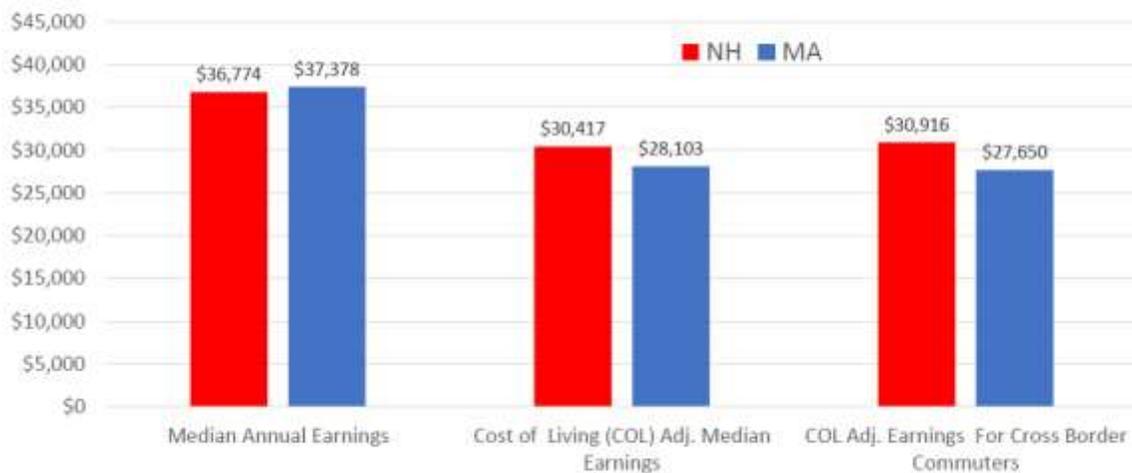
Salaries are Higher in Massachusetts Even When Adjusted for Cost of Living. There are Compelling Economic Incentives for Nurses to Live in New Hampshire but Work in Massachusetts, and Disincentives for Living in Massachusetts and Working in New Hampshire

Median Annual Earnings for Registered Nurses

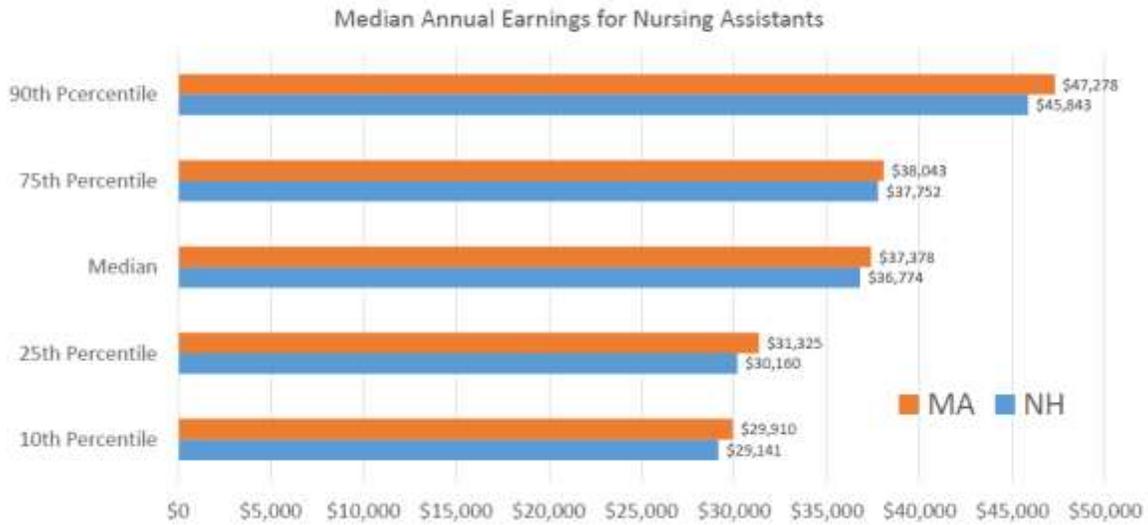


Wage Differentials Across States are Unlikely to Have Played a Significant Role in the Decline in Nursing Assistant Employment in New Hampshire

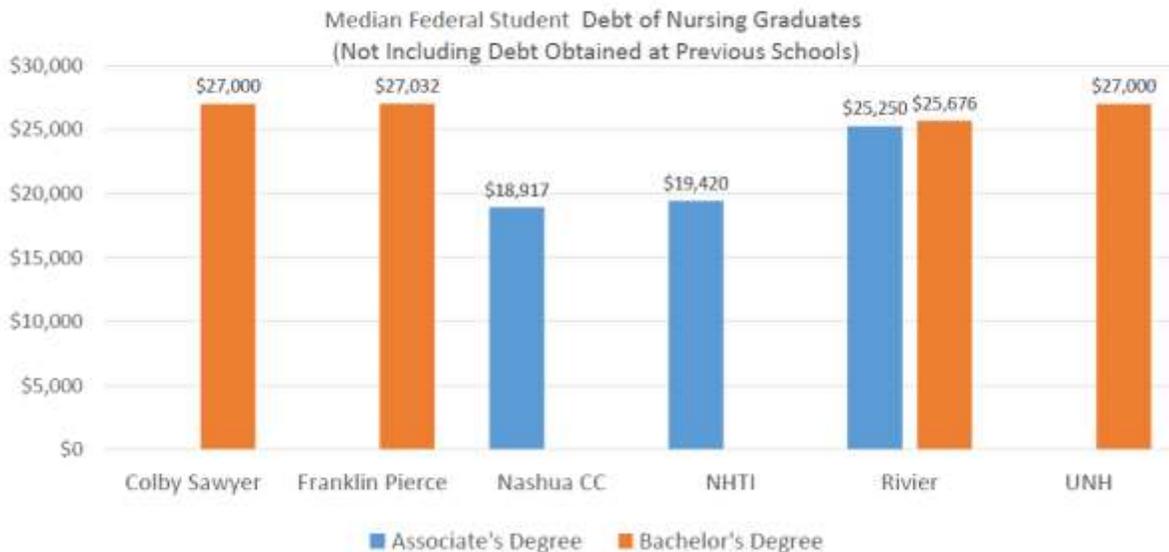
Median Annual Earnings for Nursing Assistants



There is Considerable Wage Compression by Experience for Nursing Assistants and Little Difference in Wages in New Hampshire and Massachusetts



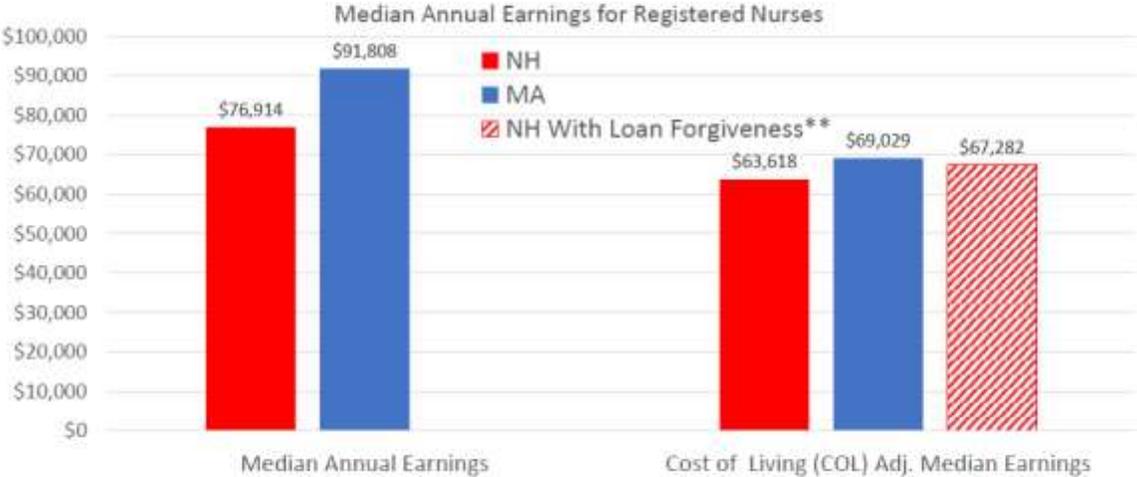
A Majority of Nursing Students Graduate With More Than \$25,000 in Federal Student Debt



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education "College Scorecard," <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>



Loan Forgiveness Can Help Make Registered Nurse Wages in New Hampshire Competitive With Massachusetts Wages



** Assumes \$27,500 in debt at 6.0% interest amortized over 120 payments (10 years) with impact on annual Earnings equal to 12 monthly payment of \$305.31 or \$3,663.68 annually. Alternatively, the lump sum value after three year period is \$21,098.96 in loan forgiveness.

